

Graham Spindler, November 2005

Harbour Circle Notes

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A HARBOUR CIRCLE WALK – NOTES ON SECTIONS

1. Sydney Harbour Bridge

From Observatory Hill, proceed to the northern end of the park just above the Argyle Cut and take the underpass through to the Bridge Stairs on The Rocks (eastern) side and climb up to the walkway. It is possible to continue further up the stairs to the Bridge roadway and Cahill walkway at the spot where the official opening of the Bridge took place in 1932. The Bridge walkway passes through the South East and North East Pylons before ending at steps down to Kirribilli and Milsons Point Station.

There are shops and hotels at Kirribilli and Milsons Point, and toilets at Milsons Point Station.

Distance: 2km **Approximate time:** 30 minutes

Condition: Mostly flat on paved footpaths, flights of stairs either end of Bridge.

When **Sydney's Harbour Bridge opened on 19 March, 1932**, it was the fulfilment of more than a century of dreams and plans. In 1915 the NSW Government approved the scheme of the Chief Engineer of the Public Works Department, **J.J.C. Bradfield**, for an underground city railway and Harbour crossing. Work began in 1923, after the English firm Dorman, Long and Co won the tender and the arch design had been adopted. Credit for the design became a controversial subject but, in effect, is shared between Bradfield, and Dorman and Long's consulting design engineer, Ralph Freeman. Dorman and Long built the 39,000 tonne, 503m span steel arch and the granite-faced concrete pylons, while the 3km of approaches were built by the Department of Main Roads. The arches - held in place by banks of cables anchored into the ground behind the rising pylons - were built simultaneously from both shores with giant 600 ton cranes creeping out along them and hauling the steelwork into position beneath. The two ends met in August 1930. By then, Australia was in the grip of the Great Depression and the 1,600 workers engaged on the project were doubtless glad of the work, despite hard and dangerous working conditions. Sixteen workers were killed and many injured on the project.

The opening contributed to the romance of the Bridge when former military officer, Francis de Groot, rode forward from the Governor's mounted escort and slashed the official opening ribbon moments before Premier Jack Lang was able to officially cut it. De Groot was arrested and fined for offensive behaviour, but his action underscored serious political tensions in NSW at the peak of the Depression. A member of the New Guard, a militant right-wing organisation, de Groot's action was intended as a protest against the radical Labor Premier. On the day, however, the incident was a small blip in the celebrations which featured a 2km long parade, fly- and sail-pasts and the opportunity for more than a million people to walk across.

Originally, the Bridge had two rail and two tram lines, as well as the equivalent of six road lanes, the **tramlines** being where the two Cahill Expressway road lanes now run next to the bridge walkway. The trams were withdrawn in 1959. Immediately after the start of the walkway from the stairway, the closed off entrances to former tramway tunnels can be seen under the road deck. The **Pylon lookout** is accessible from the walkway, offering extensive displays and views from its 87m high parapet. In 1932, this was by far the viewing point in Sydney. This Pylon's use is a little different to that of one of its opposite numbers on the north side which is used as an exhaust stack for the Harbour Tunnel which crosses under the Harbour east of the Bridge. Each of the Pylons was added to a little during WWII, when concrete anti-aircraft gun positions were established on their tops.

Immediately beyond the Pylon, grey clad Bridgewalkers are usually encountered clambering up through the roadway to climb the arch itself to its summit about 134m above water level. At least these climbers will come down slowly. On average, every three or four days for the seven months after its opening in 1932, someone suicided from the bridge, an extraordinary figure that must have been fuelled at least partly by the economic depression. These days, traffic accidents average about one a day, but there were many more in the first year as well, even though there were only a fraction of the number of motor vehicles on the bridge. This was mainly because there were no lane markings and cars wandered about so that drivers and passengers could take in the view. After September 1932, when two policemen were killed by a wandering car, the first centre line in NSW was painted (in white) on the bridge roadway.

2. Lavender Bay

*From the Bridge steps, follow the bridge approaches downhill to the Pylon at the waterfront, before turning west past North Sydney Pool. The walkway follows the shoreline to the head of Lavender Bay, past the base of the Walker Street steps under the railway arch. Pass under the arches to Watt Park and follow the rail line uphill briefly before taking the path above the tunnel mouth to King George St. Turn south into Waiwera St and follow it to East Crescent St. Either turn right, uphill, to Blues Point Rd to continue the Harbour Circle walk, or go left, downhill to take the **Blues Point Loop**. There are restaurants, shops and hotels in Blues Point Rd.*

Distance: 2 km

Approximate time: 30 minutes

Condition: Mostly flat on paved footpaths or walkways, inclines at beginning (downwards) and end (upwards).

James Milson, a Napoleonic Wars veteran who arrived in Sydney in 1804, was given a land grant for this part of the north shore and built what was probably the first house in the area. He prospered until a bushfire destroyed almost everything in 1826 including his title deeds. This proved unfortunate as it transpired that a later Governor had granted the same land to others and the protracted argument resulted in Milson retaining only a small part of the land. Nevertheless, his family (whose descendants are still here) dominated the early development of the area. **Milsons Point** was not much more than a maritime village until late in the nineteenth century when ferries, trams and the railway made it a commuting centre. The construction of the Harbour Bridge cut a swathe through its and Kirribill's commercial centre, with over 500 properties and whole streets disappearing and it was not until the 1970s and '80s that massive commercial development began changing its appearance again.

Both **North Sydney Pool** (opened 1936) and Luna Park (opened 1935) stand on the site carved out of the cliffs and reclaimed from the bay for the former Dorman, Long and Co Harbour Bridge construction workshops. Before that, this had been the site of the first **Milsons Point Railway Station** from 1893 until the bridge opened in 1932, commuters walking from here to ferry wharves located where the Bridge Pylons now are. The pool was the aquatic centre of the 1938 British Empire Games and between 1936 and 1976, 86 world records were set here – a world record in itself. Many of **Luna Park's** original rides came from Adelaide's Luna Park, which had just closed. Immensely popular until the 1960s, the Park suffered closures and uncertainty from 1979, after a Ghost Train fire in which 7 died. After upgrading and reopening in 1995, it was suspended again through resident protest at noise. Re-opened in 2004, controversy continues in the face of associated redevelopment proposals. The boardwalk leads past it and the once extensive **railway yard**. After the new line to the Bridge was opened, the old line and yard have been used for off-peak train storage. Near the end of the Lavender Bay boardwalk, look for artist Peter Kingston's small iconic objects and literary characters peeping from the bushes.

Lavender Bay is named after George Lavender, boatswain of the convict hulk *Phoenix*, which was moored in the bay in the 1830s and who lived here after he married Susannah Blue, a daughter of Billy Blue, the West Indian former convict who left his name and mark on the peninsula. Here, too, were the 1881 baths of the large Cavill Family who between them invented or introduced the Australian crawl and butterfly strokes, and held many swimming records. Men's and women's baths remained here well into the 20th century.

The railway viaduct arrived in 1893 cutting off the houses and gardens which became Watt Park. The **steps** through the viaduct arches lead to Walker Street, some luxuriant growth, and, in the gully behind the railway line, a surprising secret garden. The first house, *Berowra*, was once the Station Master's house, while the towered one on the eastern side was the home and studio of artist Brett Whiteley.

Some evidence, in the form of a slipway and winding gear, remains of another 19th century industry, boatbuilding, which continued here until 1987. **Watt Park**, with its lovely trees, is through the arch, was once the site of several substantial houses. Beyond King George Street, Waiwera is a street of substantial terraces and older houses typical of the unredeveloped areas of McMahons Point.

3. Blues Point

Cross Blues Point Rd from East Crescent St and follow steep French St down into Sawmillers Reserve. The upper pathway in the Reserve leads to the right to a zigzag path up to Munro St. Cross the railway bridge off Munro and turn left into and down Dumbarton St, then left again to pass under the railway via John St into Waverton Park at the head of Berrys Bay. There are restaurants, shops and hotels in Blues Point Rd and toilets at Waverton Park.

Distance: 1.5 km

Approximate time: 25 minutes

Condition: Several significant inclines (both up and down), mostly paved footpaths.

Blues and McMahons Points share the same peninsula between Lavender and Berrys Bays. Michael McMahon, for whom **McMahons Point** is named, was an Irish-born brush and comb manufacturer and a prominent local in the area from 1864, and later its Mayor. **Blues Point** was named after Billy Blue, an ancient West-Indian convict granted most of the Point in 1817 after establishing a rowboat ferry service (for which he was dubbed 'The Old Commodore' by Governor Macquarie). Several buildings and many area names remain with associations to the extensive Blue family, including old stone cottages slightly downhill on Blues Point Rd.

Sawmillers Reserve is an attractive waterfront park on Berrys Bay which was, from 1880 to 1982, the site of the huge Eaton's sawmill and timber yard. A few relics remain to be explored. Little is now left of the waterfront industry (wharves, sawmills, boatyards, gasworks, oil and coal stores, etc) which once dominated the waterfront west of the Bridge. The rail tunnel first met at Lavender Bay emerges from the hillside behind the Park. Though not on the direct walk route, there is an interesting waterfront link across apartments north of the park which leads to the remaining marina and a steep climb back up Munro St to rejoin the main route.

At the bottom of John St, enter the lower level of **Waverton Park** which was reclaimed during dredging to improve water access to the BP Berrys Bay Oil Terminal. The terminal, now removed, has been replaced by an imaginative new park on the rocky western shoreline. On the ridge above the eastern end of the park sits a stone house in Commodore Crescent, its oldest portion built in the 1830s for a son of Billy Blue. A level lower, and closer to Woolcott St, is an old two storey cottage, currently abandoned, possibly once the house of a caretaker on the Wollstonecraft estate which occupied much of the area. The upper section of the Park was built up with coal waste from the former Oyster Bay Gas Works. The Waverton Park area was popular with artists of the post-WWII **Northwood Group** who included Lloyd Rees and Roland Wakelin.

4. Waverton

*Cross the lower level of Waverton Park to steps leading to the upper level. Before the toilet block is reached, the path to the left begins the **Balls Head Loop**. However, to continue on the **Circle Walk**, take the path to the right across to the gateway at the north-west end of the park at the corner of Larkin and Woolcott Streets. Follow Woolcott St uphill to Balls Head Rd and across it, then downhill on Horace St. Here, steps drop down alongside HMAS Waterhen. About halfway down, take the level footpath to the right and follow it around into the Wandakiah apartment development and **Oyster Cove Reserve**. Continue along the waterfront, across the steel pedestrian bridge and up steps into Badangi Reserve.*

There are shops and restaurants uphill on Balls Head Rd towards Waverton Railway Station and toilets at Balls Head.

Distance: 1 km

Approximate time: 20 minutes

Condition: Paved and unpaved paths, mostly inclines and steep steps at HMAS Waterhen (downwards) and two sets of lesser steps near Wandakiah (upwards).

The Waverton and Wollstonecraft areas were once part of the 524 acre *Crows Nest Estate* granted to **Edward Wollstonecraft** in 1825, and later inherited by his partner and brother-in-law, Alexander Berry. The pair operated a huge and productive property near the mouth of the Shoalhaven River – the town of Berry being named after Alexander’s family. Balls Head Rd road originally lead to their wharf and warehouse. The Estate was progressively subdivided in the last parts of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, with Balls Head and Berry Island being kept as public reserves.

At Horace St, an expansive Harbour view opens towards Iron Cove and steps lead down alongside the navy base, **HMAS Waterhen**, which houses Sydney's patrol boats, minehunters and diving units. The base is named after a destroyer of the RAN’s WWII ‘scrap-iron flotilla’ sunk at Tobruk. Its naval use originated in WWII after sandstone quarried from the site was used in the construction of the Captain Cook Graving Dock at Garden Island. WWII barrack blocks built by the US Navy stood in the enclosed area from Horace St along Balls Head Road until the early 1990s.

The huge apartment development of **Wandakiah** replaced the Oyster Bay Gas Works on an industrial site with a long history – sugar works from 1857, gunpowder works, then kerosene works. Through most of the twentieth century gas was produced here from coal, and an immense stone coal bunker, several storeys high, dominated the waterfront along with two large gas-holder tanks sited up towards the railway, until the housing development began. Gas production ceased in 1976, replaced by natural gas which was initially distributed through here. The works finally closed in 1983. The artist Brett Whiteley used part of the closed down factory buildings for a studio for a time.

5. Wollstonecraft

*Having climbed up into Badangi Reserve from Oyster Cove Reserve, turn left at the track intersection and then, shortly afterwards, right to walk parallel to and just below Tryon Av to reach Shirley Rd. Turn downhill. To take the **Berry Island Loop** continue down to the reserve at the bottom of the hill. **To keep on the Harbour Circle walk**, turn right into the Gore Cove Track immediately uphill from the District Fisheries Office. The track leads downhill and then turns right to skirt above Gore Cove before dropping down to a reclaimed, wooded area at the head of the Cove. Follow the waterfront about 100m to the footbridge over the stone banked stream. The path and steps beyond lead up to Greenwich.*

There are toilets at Berry Island Reserve.

Distance: 1.2 km

Approximate time: 30 minutes

Condition: Mostly unpaved, sometimes rocky tracks – inclines (mostly downhill).

This area was still once part of the Wollstonecraft – Berry estate. **Badangi Reserve** is an area of varied and interesting woodland with a central north–south track linking the headland back up to Bridge End above *Wandakiah*. The circle route crosses this westwards, picking up an old roadway running parallel to but below Tryon Av, evidence of earlier industrial use of the reserve area.

The **District Fisheries Office** in Shirley Road provides fisheries research and inspection services for the Sydney area. Immediately uphill from it the **Gore Cove Track** leads down towards the Cove with views of the Shell Oil Terminal across in Greenwich. Passing through quality bushland behind the backyards of Milray Avenue, the track drops to the head of Berry Creek and Gore Cove. This reclaimed flat was obviously the base of some forgotten enterprise and has a rather mysterious feel to it. The northerly track leads away from the Cove, climbing and following the creek up through rainforest to Smoothery Park near Wollstonecraft Station.

6. Greenwich

*From the footbridge at the head of Gore Cove, take the path, which becomes quite steep steps, up through Holloway Reserve to the lookout at the head of Vista St in Greenwich. Turn right and then left into Edwin St. Turn left again into Chisholm St but a couple of houses downhill (past No 17) a laneway leads from the western footpath through to Greenwich Rd. **For the Greenwich Loop** continue downhill on Chisholm, but **to continue the Harbour Circle walk**, go through the lane to Greenwich Rd, walk a few steps uphill and then turn into Evelyn St. This leads into Carlotta St where a right and then an almost immediate left turn into Ford St leads to a track head at Ford Street's end. Take the track down through the bushland above Gore Creek to Gore Creek Reserve.*

There are shops uphill in Greenwich Rd and toilets at Gore Creek Reserve.

Distance: 1.5 km

Approximate time: 40 minutes

Condition: Mix of paved paths and tracks – initial steep path and rocky steps, Gore Creek track gentle downhill incline.

Greenwich appears to derive its name from George Green, who was born near Greenwich in London in 1810. Green built *Greenwich House* near the point and attempted the first subdivision in the 1840s of 'marine villas' here. However, the suburb developed slowly before the late nineteenth century.

Vista Street offers fine views over Gore Cove, Berry Island and back to the city. The Shell Oil Terminal and Manns Point (see Greenwich Loop) can be seen to the right.

The **John Taylor Memorial Presbyterian Church** at the end of the lane to Greenwich Rd is in the early twentieth century Federation style. It was donated by Mr Taylor to commemorate his daughter whose picture appears in the stained glass window at the front. Along Greenwich Rd are some of the surviving shops (their functions now changed) from the butchers, bakers, chemists, dentists, carpenters who operated here when services and communities were more localised than today. Up to the mid-twentieth century, dairy cows roamed the hillsides nearby from the Anderson dairy at the head of Evelyn St.

The **Gore Creek Reserve** area was once very picturesque before the arrival in the 1920s of NOOS (Northern Ocean Outfall Sewer), the main sewer line from the north shore. Subsequently the area was quarried, part of the cove reclaimed and playing fields created during 1930s as depression relief work. The creek was a route used by early timber getters and an early wharf operated amidst the extensive mudflats.

7. Northwood

*Beyond the sewer aqueduct at the head of Gore Cove, turn left to cross the Reserve to pick up the track where the bush begins (signposted 'Bush Walk 2'). The track follows above the creek towards River Rd. About 200m before River Rd (and just before reaching Lillipilli Falls), take the steep steps up to the left through the bush and past houses to Fleming St, Northwood. Between Nos 13 and 11 Fleming St take the laneway which leads up to Upper Cliff Rd. Turn right and then left into Northwood Rd. For the **Northwood Loop** continue downhill; **to continue the Harbour Circle walk** turn right into James Street. At its connection with Holden St, steps continue downhill from James St, the path turning left below the houses to lead to Kellys Esplanade. Follow Kellys Esplanade downhill to Woodford Bay Bicentennial Reserve on the waterfront.*

After Gore Cove Reserve, there are no toilets on this route, and no shops.

Distance: 1.5 km

Approximate time: 35 minutes

Condition: *Easy initial bush path, followed by fairly steep steps to Fleming St. Thereafter mostly paved footpaths but with fairly steep incline (downhill) from James St.*

Gore Creek was used by early colonial timbergetters and beyond the steps up to Northwood, closer to River Rd, grooves can be seen in the rocky bed of the stream that were made by their iron-clad wagon wheels. Of interest, too, may be the falls which were rehabilitated in the 1980s with a pump to restore some of their water flow. However, without rain, the Creek doesn't flow. The recurring name 'Gore' in the area comes from early landowner, William Gore. As Provost Marshall to Governor William Bligh, Gore was arrested, along with the Governor, in the Rum Rebellion of 1808 and spent the subsequent three years on a chain gang. Reinstated when Governor Macquarie arrived, he received a large land grant at Artarmon in 1813, became a leading citizen and one of the first Directors of the new Bank of NSW in 1817. However, he was punished for misappropriating court funds in 1819, and then was back in gaol again after shooting and wounding a soldier from the Woodford Bay stockade who was trespassing on his land and stealing grass. He died in 1845, deeply in debt, and his land was subsequently subdivided.

Northwood, originally known as Pennys Point, is one of Sydney's smallest suburbs, a small and rather exclusive peninsula, full of fine houses in a variety of mostly twentieth century architectural styles. The suburb's initial development from the 1870s owed much to a Mrs Jane Davy, who built the first houses, the wharf, donated land for the park, was responsible for the suburb's name change and encouraged construction of Northwood Rd. The suburb was also known in the three decades after WWII for its arts community, with a surprising number of artists and sculptors living in the area. A number of them, including Lloyd Rees, met regularly and exhibited under the name of the 'Northwood Group'.

On the northern corner of Upper Cliff and Northwood Rds, the large house *Yandama*, was built in 1922, subdividing the grounds of *Wyndarra*, an early house also built by Mrs Davy. This area of **Northwood Rd** was subdivided about 1911 and the older homes generally date from about 1912, e.g. No 66, *Patonga*; No 68; and the very early California Bungalow at No 70. At the corner of **James and Holden Sts**, *Mooiplatz* (built for a Miss Morris in 1921) has some fine leadlight glass.

Woodford Bay was the site of the first settlement in the Lane Cove area. Plaques at Woodford Bay Bicentennial Reserve tell some of the story, but the first Europeans in the area, led by Lieutenant Clark, landed here in 1790. A few years later a wharf and road were constructed from the Bay by Isaac Nichols, first postmaster of NSW. It was protected by a small stone and timber stockade, the foundations of which remain under a house in Kellys Esplanade. Remnants of the original road and an old well are also on private property. Woodford Bay, today, still retains glimpses of gentler waterfront days with its bush, mud flats and tiny beaches and boatsheds, though the Bay itself is thickly encrusted with more than 250 boat moorings.

8. Longueville

*From Woodford Bay Bicentennial Reserve, continue uphill along Woodford St, Longueville. For the **Longueville Loop**, turn left at Arabella St, but **to continue the Harbour Circle walk** climb up to Kenneth Street. Cross the street to enter Central Park, continuing westward to William Edward St. Turn right and shortly before River Road, start down the steps, left, into Warraroon Reserve. At the bottom of the gully follow the track south through the bush next to the creek until it ends at an east-west track right next to a natural stone bridge over the creek.*

There are toilets at Central Park and shops and service stations nearby at Northwood Rd.

***Distance:** 1.5 km **Approximate time:** 30 minutes*

***Condition:** Paved footpaths to Warraroon Reserve, but with long fairly steep initial incline. Rocky steps (downhill) and bush track in Warroon.*

Longueville was known as Tambourine Bay or Woodford Bay before the real estate developers decided something more up-market (and French-sounding) was needed late in the nineteenth century. Part of the reason was to disassociate it with the area's earlier, less respectable image, gained because of its reputedly wild local inhabitants and some smelly early industry, such as Australia's first soap and candle manufacturing works established here by Robert Kirk in 1835. All this changed from the 1870s when land developer, Richard Hayes Harnett and his partner, former Premier of NSW, Sir Alexander Stuart, began its subdivision as a superior waterfront suburb. Today Longueville real estate prices average amongst the nation's highest. The route to Warraroon Reserve offers only a glimpse of its mixture of fashionable houses which range from Victoriana to contemporary Tuscan.

Blaxland's Corner, the junction between Northwood, River, Longueville Rds and Kenneth St, has distant connections with explorer and agriculturalist, Gregory Blaxland, as his nephew, Francis Blaxland, owned this area, building a house, *Kailora*, at 15 Northwood Rd. The estate was subdivided in 1919, part of it becoming this small commercial area.

Central Park, actually roughly in the centre of Lane Cove Municipality, was the site of Lane Cove's first Council Chambers. The area now includes a tennis club (established 1908) and a bowls and sports club (opened 1938).

Warraroon Reserve has been brought back from being almost overwhelmed by invasive plants to a fine natural bushland through the painstaking regeneration techniques originally developed by the Bradley sisters of Mosman. At the natural stone bridge, try to decide whether or not the regularly spaced grooves in the creek's rock bank are Aboriginal axe-grinding grooves, or just water runnels.

9. Riverview

Cross the stone bridge at the head of Warraroon Reserve, Longueville, and walk uphill about 50m and turn left (downhill) on the track signposted 'Tambourine Bay'. Follow this track down (southwards) to the head of Tambourine Bay where it veers west and climbs a little under rock overhangs before entering Tambourine Bay Reserve near the small swimming baths. Cross the Reserve to Tambourine Bay Rd, turn right, uphill, and then left into Riverview Street alongside the grounds of St Ignatius (Riverview) College. The road climbs then drops sharply down and veers right. On the left side, just past the Coonah Pde intersection, locate the steps which drop down alongside the sewer aqueduct (opposite No 87) into Burns Bay Oval.

There are toilets at Tambourine Bay Reserve and Burns Bay Oval.

Distance: 2.5 km

Approximate time: 60 minutes

Condition: *Gentle inclines and bush track to Tambourine Bay Reserve. Paved footpath with steady upward incline, then sharp downhill and some steps to Burns Bay Reserve.*

The Tambourine Bay track, in a bushland area known as **Hodgson Park**, rises and dips towards sedge and mangrove areas and passes over a bank of shale supposedly from a little shale mine once here. Into the early twentieth century, this was a popular picnic area and a wooden footbridge reached across the creek and marsh from Longueville, but there is no trace of this now. Mangroves have expanded, now shielding the pleasant open area at the head of the Bay from the water. The track climbs and passes under rock overhangs and over some remnant Aboriginal shell middens before reaching the Sea Scouts hut and little harbour pool built by local residents.

Tambourine Bay Park is a delightful picnic area. The bay gets its name from one of its less salubrious earlier inhabitants known as 'Tambourine Nell' (or 'Sall?'). Explore the track that heads left at the *Riverview* school end for at least a short distance to find the old well in the bush.

Riverview, or **St Ignatius College**, originally occupied about 40 hectares, and still retains most of this. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) opened their school here in 1880. The substantial main building was constructed in sections from 1880 through to the 1920s, and in 1888 was the first on the North Shore to be lit by electricity which was generated at the College. The school has a long scientific tradition and the silver domes of its observatory can be glimpsed from the road. The first observatory was established by Father Pigot in 1908, and into recent decades its meteorological, seismic and astronomical reports have been internationally significant. The school also has a strong rowing tradition dating from when Father Garlan founded its rowing club in 1882. The Lane Cove River below the school became the first GPS regatta course before this was moved to the Parramatta River a decade later and finally to the Nepean in 1936. Even before that, Dick Green, an Australian Champion rower, trained here from the 1850s. Riverview Street divides the senior and junior schools, the latter having been built in 1964 on what had been golf links. The rest of the golf course was subdivided for housing. At **Burns Bay**, a NOOS (Northern Ocean Outfall Sewer) aqueduct (built 1929) is met again on this pleasant, reclaimed waterfront park. It was probably less pleasant in the days when it was known as 'Murdering Bay', thanks to its motley collection of sometimes dangerous inhabitants, and even later when from 1858 the hillside to the west of the park was occupied by two tanneries, the last of which closed in 1974. Apartments have since filled the site.

10. Linley Point

Follow the aqueduct across the head of Burns Bay to a footbridge, from where the path turns left, edging around the water in front of blocks of units, before climbing through bush past Sydney University Boat Club and the back of Carisbrook, and leading to Burns Bay Rd at Linley Point.

From Burns Bay Rd, turn left into View St, Linley Point, and follow it uphill, along Linley Place and turn right (downhill) into Haughton St, which immediately becomes The Avenue. At the cul de sac at the end of The Avenue, a footpath leads left (south) onto Figtree Bridge and across to Hunters Hill.

No shops on route, toilets only at Burns Bay Reserve.

Distance: 1.5 km

Approximate time: 40 minutes

Condition: *Gentle bush track to Burns Bay Rd. Through Linley Point paved footpath with steady upward incline, then sharp downhill to bridge.*

Beyond the Burns Bay footbridge the walk is along the waterfront in front of home units. This area, up to Burns Bay Rd, remains a small industrial area, but the unit site was, from 1904 to 1957, the location of the **Australian Wood Pipe Co**, which manufactured pipes, tanks and silos from wood. The sometimes huge pipes were made like long barrels coated in bitumen, and much of Sydney's water supply depended on them until technological change made metal or plastic pipes superior. The track veers up into the bushland of Linley Point Reserve. The stone steps up hill to the right are part of the original garden of **Carisbrook**. This historic 12 room sandstone Victorian home, second oldest in Lane Cove, was acquired by the Council in 1969 and is now a historic and folk museum. It can be reached by walking northwards up Burns Bay Rd. **Carisbrook** was built in 1860 by Thomas Brooks, a customs official, after his marriage to Rachel Dodd. A complex series of financial problems, purchases and inheritances had brought the 15 hectares comprising most of the Point into Rachel Dodd's ownership through her first husband. Earlier, much of the land had been owned by Richard and Thomas Linley, who had, at one stage, manufactured rope on the site. Brooks had begun the subdivision of the area before his death in 1883.

Linley Point is a small precinct of Lane Cove with occasional superb views of the river and back to the city. It offers views, also, back to Riverview College, high on its bluff over the river, and across to **Fig Tree House** in Hunters Hill. The charming, partly timber, **Fig Tree House** sits in the shadow of the bridge and freeway it barely survived. It had its origins with a stone cottage built Mary Reiby, a convict woman who made good as a highly successful and influential business person. Built near a giant fig tree in 1836, she called it **Fig Tree Cottage**. The cottage was greatly expanded after it was bought in the 1840s by a Frenchman, Didier Numa Joubert. Joubert and partners set about building the first of the fine houses which characterise Hunters Hill, as well as introducing the first ferry service to the area. The Harbour Circle crosses the Fig Tree Bridge, but at the Linley Point end the road ramp to the left gives access to the river and the very pleasant **Cunningham's Reach Park**, which is partly an old government reservation and wharf site, partly the first Fig Tree Bridge abutment, and partly reclaimed. An overhead footbridge links the park back to Linley Point at The Crescent, so a short circle could be added at this point.

The present **Fig Tree Bridge** was opened in 1963 as part of the proposed Northwestern Freeway which, happily, was never continued further up through the banks and bushland of the Lane Cove River. It was the second Fig Tree bridge, and the abutment of the first can be glimpsed on the Hunters Hill side west of the present bridge. Opened in 1885, it completed the 'Five Bridges Route' which, including the original Pymont, Glebe Island, Iron Cove, and Gladesville Bridges, providing the first land link between the city and the north shore.

11. Hunters Hill / Huntleys Point

*Immediately south of the southern abutment of the Figtree Bridge, a pathway leads down to Reiby St near Figtree House. Follow Reiby eastwards. For the **Hunters Hill Loop** walk through the gateway at the bend in the street (marked by a Great North Walk sign) to the waterfront in front of the High School, but **to continue the Harbour Circle walk**, turn uphill on Reiby. Cross the traffic lights at the Church St freeway interchange and continue downhill along Durham St to a path leading onto the Tarban Creek Bridge. The footpath crosses the Bridge and follows the slip road around under the arch of the Gladesville Bridge at Huntleys Point Rd. In the centre of the concrete arch is an opening and steps. Once through the short pedestrian tunnel, turn right up and onto the pedestrian way at the northwestern end of the Gladesville Bridge.*

There are shops, restaurants and a hotel on the western side of the Church St overpass.

Distance: 1.2 km **Approximate time:** 20 minutes

Condition: Paved footpaths, gentle inclines up and down to Tarban Creek Bridge. Some steps and incline to Gladesville Bridge.

Apart from *Fig Tree House*, this section of the Harbour Circle does not offer much of the flavour and history of this very attractive suburb, so the **Hunters Hill Loop** is highly recommended as an alternative. The main interest on this short section of the Circle Walk is the **freeway** itself, carved through the suburb in the 1960s with the consequent loss of several historic houses, including Joubert's beautiful *St Malo*, which the National Trust had leased as their first Australian property from 1955.

Hunters Hill probably gets its name from Captain John Hunter (later Governor), who explored the area after the arrival of the First Fleet. Difficult to access other than by water, there was little settlement before 1847 when Didier Numa Joubert, a wine merchant from Bordeaux, bought Mary Reiby's farm and, later joined by his younger brother Jules, set about subdividing and building elegant sandstone houses. Further houses were erected by Count Gabriel de Milhau and Leonard Bordier, who had both arrived in 1849; by Charles Jeanneret (who was actually English of Huguenot descent); and by Georges Fesq, also from Bordeaux. Hunters Hill, now fashionable, understandably became known as the 'French village' – a characteristic added to by the arrival of the Marist Fathers further to the west. Much of the building work was done by the many northern Italian (and Swiss Italian) stonemasons brought out by the Jouberts and others, and who built also small stone cottages for themselves.

The Jouberts established a ferry service, which they operated until 1906, along with *The Avenue Pleasure Grounds* (now the Hunters Hill High School site). Jeanneret also ran a competing ferry service but the completion of the five bridges route began undermining ferry services from the 1880s. Hunters Hill became a municipality in 1861 with an expanding mix of fine houses with spacious grounds, and cottages for the workers servicing them. Subdivision expanded after WWII and real estate prices began to soar. At the same time, recognition of Hunters Hill's unique character gave rise to strong urban conservation and historical action from both residents and others, in response to the dangers of overdevelopment. The most notable action was that of the 'Battlers' who persuaded the Builders Labourers' Federation to impose the world's first 'Green Ban' in 1971 to prevent the subdivision of Kellys Bush. Much of the suburb is classified as a conservation area, including more than 500 buildings listed under the NSW Heritage Act.

Hunters Hill High School, opened in 1958, was slated for closure around 2003 but an enormous and persistent local effort, together with the winds of political change, saved it. The site has an interesting history – first as Joubert's *The Avenue Pleasure Grounds*, then as a Film Studio before and after WWII, and a RAAF depot during the war.

The 1960s **Tarban Creek Bridge** leaps in a graceful arch over this inlet which ends fairly abruptly a few hundred metres upstream. Tarban Creek was the location of Australia's first purpose-built lunatic asylum (1838) which later expanded to become **Gladesville Hospital**. The hillside between Tarban Creek and Victoria Road, now rolling with villas and apartments in Mediterranean hues, was until the 1990s part of the hospital grounds, much of it once the hospital's farm. On the other side, the French Marist Brothers established *Villa Maria*, a base for their Pacific missionary work in the 1860s, and the church and associated buildings and land are still in use by them

Huntleys Point was originally known as Tarban Point, but that changed when A. H. Huntley bought 8

hectares of it in 1841 and built his house (*Point House*) there. With little more than one road and water views all round, it must be Sydney's smallest and most exclusive suburb. The massive **Gladesville Bridge** which dominates the area, was the largest single span concrete arch in the world when it opened in 1964. Crossing a distance of about 300m, it reaches 40m above the water at its crest and boats passing under can be comforted by the thought that about 75,000 tonnes of concrete is suspended above them. The first Gladesville Bridge, opened in 1884, a low level bridge with a swing span, joined the Gladesville side 500m further west, where the Gladesville ferry wharf now is.

12. Drummoyne

*At the Drummoyne (southern) end of the Gladesville Bridge, take the first footpath exit left into Cambridge Rd, reversing direction (parallel now to the Bridge) and walk down to Drummoyne Ave. Turn right, and later left to follow Wrights Rd (now heading south again). For the **Drummoyne Alternative route**, turn left at Wolseley St. **For the main Harbour Circle route**, continue along Wrights Rd, and turn left at Seymour St, right at Collingwood St, right at Lyons Rd and then left into Renwick St. At Day St, turn left and then right at Arcadia Av, before curving down through Salton Reserve near its end towards the Drummoyne Sailing Club and the waterfront walk around Birkenhead Point. This walkway passes the marina, shops and units to the Birkenhead Wharf almost below the Iron Cove Bridge. From the wharf, climb the steps to Henley Marine Drive. To take the **Bay Walk Loop**, follow Henley Marine Drive to the left. **To continue on the Harbour Circle walk**, cross the road with great care (this is a dangerous curve) and up the rising path on the Birkenhead (north eastern) side of the bridge abutment onto the walkway across the Iron Cove Bridge to Rozelle.*

There are shops, restaurants and toilets at Birkenhead.

Distance: 3.8 km

Approximate time: 65 minutes

Condition: Flat or gentle inclines on paved footpaths. Steps at Iron Cove Bridge.

William Wright, a merchant and whaler, bought the northern end of this peninsula in 1853, building his house, *Drummoyne*, at the point. The name (Gaelic for 'flat topped ridge') was inspired by the family home at Drummoyne on the Clyde in Scotland. Mrs Wright lived on in the house almost to the end of the century and later, around the end of WWI, it was the home of Mrs Anthony Hordern. Drummoyne Av leads to Wrights Point where a small park retains steps and a landing place associated with Wright's now-demolished house.

In the first section of **Wright's Rd** almost uninterrupted units occupy the river side, where the oldest houses once were, but there are several very fine survivors on the Victoria Rd side, notably imposing **No 45, Omrah**, built just after the turn of the twentieth century. The Wrights Point end of the Drummoyne Peninsula, well away from the industry to the south, was obviously the choice of the well to do. Beyond Wolseley St many delightful Federation cottages survive, homes of the more modest middle class or trades people. In **Collingwood St**, with its rise and potential views, there is a fine run of Victoriana, beginning with the somewhat Gothic **No 21, Glendelough**, on the corner with Seymour St. It has some fine stained glass. **No 17, Candacraig**, has been spectacularly restored. Neighbouring **No 15**, originally *Taranganba*, was probably once almost identical, and was for a while in the 1920s a private school called Parks College, run by the Misses Moore. The next few, most built before 1891, are almost as impressive and the curved, barley-twist iron gatepost at **No 7** is unusual (and possibly at times inconvenient).

By **Renwick St**, the housing has become a rather charming mix of Victorian, Edwardian and later brick, timber and stone working class cottages. Their presence here is logical, closer to the shops and trams and to Cockatoo Island and other waterfront industries, including the Birkenhead rubber factory and, later, Balmain Power Station. By 1891, when there were about 25 houses on the river side but only a handful on the Victoria Rd side, the householders included carpenters, boilermakers, plasterers, a van proprietor, an artist, a scalemaker and, close to Day St, dairykeepers. By the 1920s, the street was fully built up and surprisingly little has changed since. The survival of the houses in such intact condition possibly relates to the freeway reservation which may still lurk here. **No 20, Fernbank** (1885) seems to aspire to something a little grander. Towards Day St the occurrence of stone cottages increases and the mirror-image pair at **No 8 (Somerville, 1889)** and **No 6 (Keoghville, 1890)** certainly take the eye.

At the bottom of Day Street the eyes are drawn to the spectacular views of Spectacle and Cockatoo Islands. **Spectacle Island**, the nearest, was named because of its original shape but it has been considerably enlarged since. Some powder magazines were established on it in 1863 and from then on it became a naval stores depot. Now essentially a fascinating historical repository, the buildings packed into its tiny area contain tens of thousands of items from almost a century of Royal Australian Naval history, ranging from toothbrushes to torpedos. There are regular tours available. **Cockatoo Island**, now operated by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, also offers a range of tours and public programs which give an insight into its fascinating past. Evidence of its days as a convict prison coexist with its

remarkable shipbuilding history. Two dry docks (the one most easily seen from here is the 1884 Sutherland Dock), huge engineering and machine shops, cranes, a powerhouse, houses, prison barracks, convict-built underground grain silos, tunnels and more make this a fascinating place to visit. In use as a major facility for more than a century, the dockyard was closed and partly dismantled in 1992 while speculation raged over its future. With the founding of the Harbour Trust in 2000, public access and use was assured.

The third of the nearby islands, **Snapper Island**, is more easily seen from the Salton Reserve end of Arcadia Av. It was built up as a sea cadet training depot in the 1930s and is now, like Cockatoo, controlled by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. It has a little museum of naval items including some salvaged from the first HMAS *Sydney* by the cadets. Looking across the water here from Cockatoo to Birchgrove, it is worth recalling the one prisoner who did escape from the Cockatoo Island Prison. This was the bushranger '**Captain Thunderbolt**', Frederick Ward, who swam to freedom in 1863, undeterred by the rumours and actuality of sharks. Thunderbolt resumed his bushranging in the New England district, finally dying in a shootout with police in 1870.

Down at the water, the nearby little point and beach by **Drummoyne Sailing Club** are an excellent place for a break.

Birkenhead Point is now a mix of apartment development, shops and marina. The first industry on the point, a salting and boiling down works, was established by Charles Abercrombie in 1844 who, since he was from Liverpool in England, was probably the originator of the name 'Birkenhead'. In 1900 the Perdriau Brothers set up a rubber importing company here which, as the motor age dawned, began to manufacture rubber tires. In 1929 Dunlops took over and by the 1960s, 1,600 employees were engaged in **tire manufacture** here in a large plant. However, it had become outmoded and Dunlops closed it down in 1977. This opened the way for an imaginative recycling of the factory buildings into a waterfront shopping centre in 1979 for DJs Properties through architect Peter Hickey. It was a groundbreaking development in many ways, but out of the mould of subsequent suburban mall-style developments. Waterfront apartments apparently became a more financially attractive proposition by the mid 1990s, and the shops have tended to be replaced by bargain stores.

13. Rozelle / Lilyfield

*At the Balmain-Rozelle (southern) end of the Iron Cove Bridge walkway, take the steps down to the left which loop under the Bridge to emerge at King George Park. For the **Balmain Loop**, cut down to the water level and pass under the Bridge again to the north-eastern side opposite Birkenhead. **To continue the Harbour Circle walk**, continue on the Rozelle side across King George Park on the path parallel to Iron Cove, up across the sandstone rise and out to the rocky point. **The Bay Walk Loop** joins up at the point and could be taken in a reverse direction from here if desired. **To continue the Harbour Circle walk**, return southwards to the bitumen road and follow it uphill. At the intersection with North and Central Crescents cut across to the left to walk around the walls of the massive main block of buildings of the former Callan Park Asylum / Rozelle Hospital (now the Sydney College of the Arts). Beyond the complex's impressive gateways, cross the parkland to the left to the Balmain Rd gates. Cross at the traffic lights to Cecily St, Lilyfield. Follow it downhill and turn left into O'Neill St, which meanders leftwards into Cheltenham St. Turn downhill at Denison St and then left to follow Burt St alongside Easton Park into Lilyfield Rd (at Gordon St). This leads to Victoria Road and, to the right, the footbridge over the Road connecting with the Anzac Bridge approaches.*

There are toilets at King George and Easton Parks and Rozelle Hospital, and shops on Balmain Rd (mostly northwards).

Distance: 3.5 km **Approximate time:** 70 minutes

Condition: *Mostly paved footpaths, flat or with gentle inclines. Steps at Iron Cove Bridge and Rozelle Hospital. Iron Cove Bridge pedestrian crossing narrow, often crowded and shared with bikes.*

The First **Iron Cove Bridge**, part of the Five Bridges Route from Sydney to the North Shore, was a low level iron lattice bridge opened in 1882. Its abutments stand close by those of the existing higher level 1950s bridge.

King George Park was proclaimed in 1912 on reclaimed land, but the little headland beyond it is relatively unchanged despite the presence of some former hospital buildings. A clamber up around the rocks here will reveal some original vegetation such as casuarinas, and some disturbed Aboriginal shell middens, but the most curious things are the obviously European **rock carvings**. Presumably done by a hospital inmate and possibly having some Masonic symbolism, they include sailing ships, anchors, stars, crescents, globes, people, dates and long strings of letters, all of which add a little mystery to the walk.

Rozelle Hospital, Callan Park and the Kirkbride Block. In 1819, Governor Macquarie made two land grants which would later become the grounds of Rozelle Hospital. The easterly one, named *Garryowen* for a time, was known by the 1860s as **Callan Park**. By 1873, the existing 'lunatic asylums', such as the one nearby at Gladesville, were dreadfully overcrowded and alarmingly inadequate. When the Callan Park estate came onto the market in 1873, the 'NSW Inspector of the Insane', Dr Frederick Norton Manning, and the Colonial Architect, James Barnet, were able to prod the government into purchasing it as the site for a new institution. *Callan Park House* was the only part of the new hospital available for use until the main block was built. Today the original house remains, renamed *Garryowen*, as the NSW Writers Centre.

Modelled on Chartham Hospital in England and secured within either high walls or 'Ha-Has' (walls concealed in ditches) the massive new complex of 33 buildings enclosed an area of 5.3 hectares and was built in a single contract between 1880 and 1885 - the most expensive public works program NSW had until then undertaken. It was known as the **Kirkbride Block** after Thomas S. Kirkbride, an American doctor whose ideas had influenced Manning and Barnet. The 666 patients it was designed for lived in 44 dormitories, 170 single rooms and 4 'padded cells', but the complex was designed to provide spacious pavilion wards opening onto 'airing courts'. Less constrained patients could wander restoratively in the large and beautifully planted parklands. The complex was almost self-contained with all facilities and its own underground reservoirs filled by water collected on the roofs and then pumped up to a central tower from which it could be reticulated. By 1961, Kirkbride, or **Callan Park**, peaked at 1,750 patients – almost three times as many as it was designed for. But the practices and

politics of mental health treatment were changing, particularly with modern pharmacology and outpatient approaches. In 1971, Callan Park was amalgamated with its adjacent mental health institution, Broughton Hall (which incorporated a large war service repatriation section) as **Rozelle Hospital**; and in 1983 the Richmond Report proposed de-institutionalisation including closure of most mental hospitals. The number of patients dropped to a few hundred, mostly housed in smaller new buildings, and the 64 waterfront hectares began to look very tempting to successive governments. Largely through community action groups determined to retain this irreplaceable open space and heritage for future public use, the hospital grounds have not been nibbled away, and the spectacular Kirkbride Block was renovated and adapted in the 1990s to become **Sydney College of the Arts**.

There haven't been many lilies (or fields, for that matter) in **Lilyfield** for some time, and it is not certain what the name was actually derived from. The Lilyfield area was part of the *Garryowen* estate, part of which later became Callan Park Asylum. The house and estate were built up around 1840 by John Ryan Brenan, solicitor and Sydney Coroner. Brenan, born in 1798 in Garryowen in County Limerick, arrived in Sydney in 1834. He also bought an adjoining estate in 1842 and built *Broughton Hall*, which became the basis of a later psychiatric institution.

The streets on the Circle Walk are full of charming little cottages, many in timber since nearby Blackwattle/ Rozelle Bay was once a major timber port. Several timberyards remain in the area and many of their workers, and workers in other city industries, would have lived in this area. The Balmain Rd area has buildings originating with the small workshops and industries once common in the area. Most of the housing is single storey detached cottages on small allotments, the architectural styles reflecting a concentration of development in the late Victorian, Federation and inter-war periods. Amidst this are growing examples of post WWII and much more recent redevelopment, but this sloping area – also known as Nannygoat Hill (no doubt from the days when the wandering goats ate the lilies) – strongly retains its modest, working class appearance (if not its modest real estate prices). Around Denison St and **Easton Park**, there is almost a nineteenth century rural village feel with the little shops and the hotel-like building on the Burt St corner. In fact the latter seems never to have been a hotel, apparently built about 1905 as *Smiths Hall*, accommodation with shops such as a draper's and butcher's.

14. Glebe Island / Pyrmont

*From the White Bay (northeastern) end of the footbridge over Victoria Rd near the intersection with The Crescent, follow the shared bike and pedestrian path towards Glebe Island and the Anzac Bridge (but watch for bikes!). Immediately, a curved pedestrian / bike bridge crosses Victoria Rd for the **Blackwattle Bay Loop**. Continue towards the Anzac Bridge **to stay on the Harbour Circle walk**. The **Blackwattle Bay Loop** can also be accessed from steps down and under the Anzac Bridge at the Anzac statue. **To continue on the Harbour Circle walk**, keep to the Bridge walkway. The circuitous pedestrian / bike descent from the Pyrmont (southeastern) end of the bridge drops into Quarry Master Rd. To take the **Pyrmont Loop**, leave Quarry Master Rd by climbing the steps or ramp up to Jones St. **To continue on the Harbour Circle walk**, follow the rightwards curve of the road and then look for the large passageway in the middle of the first unit block on the left (next to No 1/14 Quarry Master Rd). This leads through immediately to a footbridge over the Light Rail tracks and a walkway under towering quarried cliffs to Mount Street at the bottom of steel stairs. Turn right and follow Mount St out to Miller Street, and turn left. Miller veers right into Union St, passes the Casino, then briefly joins with Bridge Rd. Cross Murray St to the Pyrmont Bridge above the National Maritime Museum.*

There are shops, restaurants, hotels and toilets at Pyrmont (especially Harris St) and Darling Harbour.

Distance: 2.5 km

Approximate time: 60 minutes

Condition: Paved footpaths, flat or with gentle inclines. Partly shared bike path.

The **White Bay** area is another part of the old industrial waterfronts of Sydney whose function and purpose have changed and are about to change much more. The empty former hotel on Victoria Rd characterises the area's sense of being in limbo at present. The White Bay power station, built in 1917 and closed in 1983, is an immense space for which an adaptive future use will be found – the options not including housing. Beyond it, the White Bay Container Wharves have been recently closed, ending the usefulness of the Rozelle Bay rail line under Victoria Rd here and the nearby marshalling yards. Ahead, the great bulk wheat silos are also disused, although the car carrier wharf beyond is certainly still in use.

White Bay originally joined Rozelle Bay and the approaches to the Anzac Bridge are on the causeway to Glebe Island which now separates the two bays. Named for its proximity to the Glebe lands, **Glebe Island** was a humpy little island of barely 13 hectares which became the site of the city **Abattoirs** in 1857. The causeway (then called Abattoir Rd) was expanded and the island joined to the 'mainland' in 1918. Over the years, the island was flattened to build wharves and huge grain stores. In 1915, after years of complaints about smell, pollution and traffic delays caused by herds of cattle and sheep, the Glebe Island Abattoirs were closed and moved to Homebush – now the site of Sydney Olympic Park. During **WWII** there was an upsurge of activity on the wharves. The first US troops to disembark in Australia, on 28 March, 1942, came ashore at Glebe Island, and there is a memorial marking this above the car terminal wharf about 100m north of the Anzac Bridge.

The cable-stayed **Anzac Bridge** was initially called the **Glebe Island Bridge** – the third of that name. Construction began in 1989 and the Bridge with its 120m high pylons and deck 27m above water was opened December 1995. Its height had been designed particularly to accommodate two colliers which used Blackwattle Bay, the *Goliath* and the *Camira*. Both had been taken out of service before the bridge was opened. On Armistice Day 1999, the Bridge was renamed and the statue of the Australian soldier unveiled. The second Glebe Island Bridge, opened in 1902-03, is a wood and steel bridge 110 metres long, much of which is a steel swing span with a centrally located control room. The bridge is, of course, still there and the span still operational although it is kept permanently open. As well as motor and horse traffic, it also carried trams on the Ryde line between 1910 and 1953. By the time of its replacement, traffic delays at opening times had become almost legendary. In its turn this bridge, too, had replaced an even earlier, low level wooden bridge built in 1857 to the Abattoirs.

Crossing the bridge offers good views of its predecessor as well as the massive redevelopment of the Pyrmont waterfront. The area closer to the Bridge had been the huge **Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) Plant**. The company had moved its plant here from Chippendale in the 1870s. A century later they had

440 staff here and an output of 6,000 tonnes of sugar per week, and as well as a huge distillery, molasses and golden syrup production. The plant also produced caneite and particle board. Along the way they also became the major landlord of Pymont, though one more likely to demolish than to be too concerned about its housing assets. Suddenly by 1990, the company changed its opposition to the residential growth, closed down its plant and put its land into the pool of massive redevelopment then beginning. Amongst the waterfront tower blocks that now occupy the former factory site, a few of its original buildings remain, recycled into the new development.

The last hundred metres of the pedestrian crossing pass the site of another **Power Station**, built as late as 1955 but almost immediately outmoded. Also demolished just below was the **1930s Pymont Incinerator** designed by Walter Burley Griffin and his partner, Eric Nicholls. Despite its unsavoury role, burning 100 tons of refuse each day amidst an at least partly residential area, it was a cubist architectural wonder featuring details based on Aztec motifs. It was demolished in the 1980s for apartments.

The famous Merino king, John Macarthur, allegedly bought the point for a gallon of rum from its original soldier grantees. The name **Pymont** appears to come from a leap of imagination by one of his guests who, at a picnic on the point in 1806, discovered a spring and somehow thought of Bad Pyrmont, a spa town in northern Germany. On the other hand, perhaps it was simply a Europeanisation of the name used by the dispossessed owners of the land, the Cadigal people, who called the area 'Pirrama', meaning 'rocking stone'. Macarthur had done little to his land, but his son, Edward, began clearing and subdividing in 1836 and soon **industry** began to flow into the area - timber mills, iron foundries and mills, tin smelters, galvanising works, a bone crushing mill - all very polluting and unappealing - along with wharves and roadways. Speculative development of worker's rental houses accompanied the process. But it was quarrying that was the first major industry, as Pymont was a source of fine yellow sandstone of exceptional strength.

The most famous **quarrying** family in Pymont - the 'quarrymaster' of Quarry Master Rd (and, of course nearby Saunders St) - began with the arrival in Sydney of Charles Saunders, a stonemason from Devonshire, in 1852. He leased some land in northwestern Pymont and established his first quarry. Eventually 300 men and 60 horses were at work in the Saunders quarries providing the stone for most of Sydney's best-known nineteenth century public buildings such as Sydney University and the GPO, as well as many private ones. The keystone for the main arch of Sydney GPO was a single block weighing 25 tons about 4m x 2m x 1.5m, hauled to Martin Place from Pymont by a team of 26 Clydesdale horses. Quarry Master Rd soon provides dramatic evidence of one of the quarry sites which transformed the city's built environment and Pymont's topography.

By the beginning of the twentieth century Pymont was also an important **port** exporting most of NSW's farm produce but the most dramatic changes in that respect were about to happen as the new Sydney Harbour Trust began a massive reconstruction of Sydney's port facilities.

Pymont has seen a startling **transformation** in the last decade or so. In 1900 it had been one of the most industrialised and urbanised places in Australia, with up to 20,000 inhabitants and 25 hotels. After WWII, the outmoded heavy and grimy industry in the area went into decline, houses became more likely to be demolished than repaired or built and by 1990 Pymont was one of the emptiest places in Sydney, the population below 1,000 and the schools, churches and most of the pubs closed.

Plans for public housing came to little over the twentieth century but by the late 1980s public housing seemed less likely than private development and by the end of 1989 this was under way. The **City West Development Corporation** was created in 1992 to completely redevelop Pymont-Ultimo with private development and public infrastructure. This role was taken over by the **Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority** in 1999. The new Pymont is very modern, though with constant connections to and interpretation of its remarkable heritage. It is pedestrian and public transport friendly and has greatly increased and attractive public spaces, despite a massive medium and high density rebuild that will bring it back to around 20,000 residents again.

Leaving Quarry Master Rd through the pedestrian passage, the footbridge crosses what is now the **Metropolitan Light Rail** tracks where they emerge from tunnels and cuttings connecting them with Darling Harbour. The MLR has operated on this section of rail line from 1997 but the line was originally opened in 1919 as a goods railway connecting Darling Harbour with rail lines in Sydney's inner west. Beyond this, the walk passes under more of the massive cliffs created by decades of **quarrying** until it reaches a daunting steel staircase which climbs to the upper reaches of Mount St. **Miller and Union Streets** offer a slice of Pymont before its redevelopment. Harris St (named for Surgeon John Harris of *Ultimo House* who acquired most of the peninsula between 1803 and 1816) at

this point is mostly nineteenth or very early twentieth century. Across the street, part of Union Street is now pedestrianised as Union Square, although before the Western Distributor opened, this was the main road to the Pymont Bridge. The remarkable WWI memorial with its winged figure holding a shield of honour captures the eye, even amidst one of the most attractive precincts in the area. Note the fine former post office; Union Terrace (1851) - a rare example of a Georgian stone terrace; and, across the square, Paternoster Row - a later, very utilitarian style of terrace. The war memorial records the names of the 150 Pymont locals who died in WWI out of the 750 who enlisted – figures which reflect the number and nature of the suburb's population at that time.

Past Edward Street is the site of Pymont's 1904 power station which provided the city with its electric light for many years. Like other former industrial buildings around this area, it made way for the **Sydney Casino**. The \$900m Star City Casino opened here at the end of 1997, although a temporary one had been in operation for two years before.

15. Darling Harbour

*From the Pymont end of the Pymont Bridge above the National Maritime Museum, cross this pedestrian / monorail bridge and descend via the stairs, escalators or lift to the waterfront on the City side near the Sydney Aquarium. Follow the wharf fronts around past the Aquarium onto the wharf walk in front of the King Street Wharf complex as far as Wharf 4. An **alternative** is to follow the Darling Harbour waterfront all the way around from the National Maritime Museum past the Imax Theatre and under the expressway, and back up past the Cockle Bay complex to the Aquarium. There are shops, restaurants, hotels and toilets at Pymont, Darling Harbour and King St Wharf.*

Distance: 1 km

Approximate time: 25 minutes

Condition: Flat, paved footpaths. Steps optional.

The Cadigal people called **Darling Harbour** ‘Tumbalong’, ‘a place to find seafood’; Europeans called it ‘Cockle Bay’ for similar reasons. It gained its present name in 1826, in honour of Governor Ralph Darling and by then already had several wharves, including the market wharf at Market Street.

In 1855, at the dawn of railways in NSW, a goods line was built into the Darling Harbour mudflats. It was intended to go further but this took many years. However, the mudflats area was reclaimed and quickly became a 26 hectare **goods rail yard** servicing the busiest port in Australia. Surrounding the port were finger wharves, industry, mills and sawmills, warehouses and markets.

The quarries bringing their stone into the city from Pymont were one of the reasons the Pymont Bridge Company raised capital and built the first **Pymont Bridge** in 1857-8. From it roads linked to Glebe Island (with its new bridge) and Parramatta Rd via Glebe. The new Pymont Bridge was wooden and had a swing span, but its high toll (9d for carriages; 2d for each person) discouraged use. It also limited shipping access to the Goods Yard, despite dredging, and prevented the rail line from extending into Pymont. The bridge was bought by the Government in 1884 and tolls were abolished. By 1902 it had been replaced by the current 369 metre 14 span bridge. Twelve of the spans are wooden but the two that make up the 800 ton swing span are steel. This span, still operated by its original electric motors, can open or shut in just 45 seconds. The design became known as an Allan Truss after the bridge designer, Percy Allan, who eventually designed more than 580 bridges, almost all of them in NSW. With the opening of the **Western Distributor** freeway in 1981, Pymont Bridge was closed and was to be demolished to improve access to the wharves and good yards. After public protest (and recognition that the goods yards themselves were by then redundant), the Government reconsidered and it reopened as part of the Darling Harbour re-development in 1988 as a pedestrian bridge with a monorail on top. It still continues to open regularly, reaching opening number 600,000 in 1992.

In the meantime, **Darling Harbour Goods Yard** had been completely transformed. It was still in full use during and after WWII for goods, but by the 1970s the development of Port Botany and containerisation saw its era coming to an end. By the 1980s it was virtually empty and in 1984 the last goods train pulled out. The Government announced its complete redevelopment as an entertainment, convention and exhibition centre as part of the lead up to the **1988 Bicentennial** of European settlement. Work began in 1985. With the Bicentennial only a couple of years away, the project was fast-tracked by the newly created Darling Harbour Authority, leading to considerable and sustained public controversy, as well as predictions that it would never be completed in time. Nevertheless, on May 4, 1988, Queen Elizabeth II was able to duly declare the completed **Darling Harbour Project** open, after which, generally, Sydneysiders’ complaints were replaced by an increasing enthusiasm for the area.

In 1998 the Cockle Bay complex was added to the range of buildings and facilities. During the **2000 Sydney Olympics**, Darling Harbour was a major visitor centre as well as the site for the Volleyball, Weightlifting, Boxing, Judo and Wrestling competitions. Each year, at least 14 million visitors come to Darling Harbour, many of them patronising the nearly 100 restaurants, cafes and bars.

The **Australian National Maritime Museum** emerged along with the Darling Harbour project in 1984 in recognition of the enormous significance of maritime heritage to Australia. Designed by Philip Cox, its development faced political and industrial hurdles which delayed its opening until 1991. However, it quickly became a vibrant and popular museum. Its largest permanent exhibits include the Daring class destroyer, HMAS *Vampire*, the Oberon class submarine HMAS *Onslow* and the Cape Bowling Green Lighthouse from North Queensland.

16. City / Observatory Hill

*From the King Street Wharf (Wharf 4) walk right, out into Erskine St and uphill to turn left into Shelly St. At its end, curve right into Sussex St. Continue left (northwards) on Sussex St, which, past Napoleon St, becomes Hickson Rd. At the Bond buildings at No 36, cross the courtyard to either the chromium staircase or the glass-walled lift. Take the lift (or stairs) to Level 4 (Jenkins St), turn right and then immediately left uphill along Gas Lane, then left into Kent St. To take the **Millers Point / Rocks Loop** continue along Kent Street, **but to complete the Harbour Circle walk** climb the Agar Steps, immediately before the tennis court, to Observatory Hill. Circle the Observatory buildings and complete the Circle Walk at the northern slope above the Argyle Cut.*

There are shops, restaurants and hotels at King St and Millers Point, and toilets at King St Wharf and in Argyle Place.

Distance: 1 km **Approximate time:** 30 minutes

Condition: Paved footpaths. Steps and inclines from King St Wharf and up Agar Steps and Observatory Hill. Optional stairs (lift available) from Hickson Rd to Jenkins St and incline up Gas Lane.

The **Sydney Aquarium**, one of new Darling Harbour's oldest attractions, stands on the oldest wharf of the area, the Market St Wharf, originally built in the 1820s to land produce for the Sydney Markets up where the Queen Victoria Building now stands. Beyond it is the recently built **King St Wharf** area. The wharves here display a great deal of their history in interpretive signs along the way. Built on 1970s concrete container wharves 9-10, small finger wharves have now been added (and renumbered 1 to 9). The billion-dollar complex opened in 2001 with restaurants and commercial areas fronting the water, and business and residential development behind. In 2003 ferry and charter and cruise ship services moved to these wharves as well.

Lime was essential for mortar and building and, in early Sydney, came almost entirely by burning shells. The reconstituted **Lime St** was named for the lime-kilns operating in this part of Darling Harbour until about 1850. Similarly Shelley St is a result of the King St Wharf redevelopment, although partly incorporating former, and once appropriately named, Wheat Street.

No 8 Wharf now operates as a **Passenger Terminal** for cruise ships and a Function Centre. Thereafter, the great flat container and roll-on, roll-off wharves 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are still operating for the moment as **Sydney Harbour's last container terminal**. The future of these 22 hectares of flat waterfrontage is already being planned as residential, commercial developments with significant public space. In 1800, this length of waterfront was a quiet bay reaching in to Sussex St. By 1900, it was a mass of small wharves for ferries commuting to the west of the city, and for colliers, cargo and passenger steamers, tugs and tall sailing ships.

Early in the twentieth century the entire bay was redeveloped by the Sydney Harbour Trust's massive reconfiguration of Sydney wharves from Dawes Point through to Pyrmont, building large modern finger wharves. In their turn, these were replaced in the 1970s by the great flat concrete hardstands of today which filled in the entire bay and effectively extended the city 400m westwards. Their role was to accommodate containers, but the heavy road traffic this generated was becoming a problem in Sydney. The subsequent development of Port Botany pulled most cargo shipping around to Botany Bay and the wharves around the western harbour were progressively consolidated and closed, leaving only this site.

The amazingly broad **Hickson Rd** is an extension of Sussex St built before WWI as part of the Harbour Trust's massive construction which swept away the old wharves and warehouses. Used by the great horse-hauled wool waggons and motor lorries, its width was also intended to allow for a rail line to Walsh Bay, but this was never built. On the corner of the ramp from Hickson curiously called Napoleon St, is the brick former Grafton Bond store.

The **Australian Gas Light Company** (AGL) was formed in 1837, manufacturing and delivering gas from this site for town gas street lighting from 1841. The 5 storey stone office and former warehouse building at **No 36 Hickson Rd** was built in 1845 as part of the Gas Works which extended from these buildings across to the waterfront, while the adjacent two-storey brick building was added to the plant in

1899. The new Hickson Rd went through the centre of the outmoded plant and AGL moved to Mortlake.

If possible, take a look (or a walk) into the rear foyer of **30 The Bond** (immediately next to the lift) for interesting architecture with a dramatic incorporated rock face.

The lift at the AGL site rises to **Jenkins Lane**, which was originally the most westerly street in this area, its little houses pleasantly located directly above the Gas Works. Down its southern end is an interesting terraced area. There are no prizes for guessing the origins of Gas Lane's name.

Kent St, like several hereabouts, was renamed in 1810 by Governor Macquarie after the Dukes who were the sons of King George III. Across the Bridge entry ramp, the tall green apartment block (*Observatory Tower*) was recycled from the former IBM Centre. A little further along, past the Fire Station, **The Ark**, (or *Noahs Ark*), the oldest building in Millers Point, sits perched above street level. In 1820, when Thomas Glover built these houses, this was the street level. Next to it, also above road level, is the important **Richmond Villa**. Built by Colonial Architect, Mortimer Lewis, as his private home in 1849, it was actually located facing The Domain behind Parliament House off Macquarie St. It was acquired by the Crown in 1880, and used by the Parliamentary Library, before the Country Party made it their home away from home. When Parliament House was redeveloped from 1976 on, *Richmond Villa* was disassembled stone by carefully marked stone, relocated and re-assembled here in Kent St. It is now headquarters for the Society of Australian Genealogists. The design prize-winning **Observatory Hotel**, on the western side of the street, was built in the early 1990s, made way for by demolitions of buildings not considered to be 'of heritage value'.

The tennis court sits in the site of one of the earliest of many quarries in the area. Next to it, the **Agar Steps** were named after Thomas Agar who settled here from 1829 and the terraces stepping up with the stairs date from 1870-80s. At the top of the steps, a right turn will lead into the Headquarters of the National Trust (NSW), part of which was a **Military Hospital**, built by Macquarie in 1815. By 1848 the army had moved from their old Wynyard Barracks to the new Victoria Barracks in Paddington and the hospital closed. The building was transferred to the new Board of Education, substantially altered, and reopened in 1850 as a 'Model School'. Here student teachers were taught as well as students. **Fort Street Primary School** continues, but now in newer buildings almost moated in by the deep curve of the Cahill Expressway access ramp. The old Weather Bureau block shares the same space. In 1911, Fort Street Boys and Girls High Schools were formed on Observatory Hill, but the Boys moved to Petersham in 1916. The Girls School continued here until the two schools were merged at Petersham in 1974. The former hospital / school was then taken over as the Ervine Gallery and **National Trust Centre** following a 1977 bequest to the Trust by wool buyer, Harry Ervine.

Observatory Hill, besides having stunning views, has much else of interest. There is no sign now of the first windmill in Australia, erected here in 1796 and abandoned ten years later when it threatened to grind itself apart. What certainly is here is part of the walls of the never completed **Fort Philip**, which was begun in 1804 after a convict rising near Castle Hill. In 1825 it was made into a signal station ("Flagstaff"), and the only action it ever saw was as a polling booth in NSW's first ever election in 1843. Candidates included William Charles Wentworth, William Bland and Captain Daniel O'Connell. At one point, led by whaler owner, John James, 500 O'Connell supporters, mostly sailors armed with harpoons and staves, stormed the hill and drove off the opposition. Despite charges by mounted police and postponement of the poll until the next day, the rioting continued through the night.

In 1858, the **Sydney Observatory** was completed by Alexander Dawson within the old fort site. The tower still has the orange time ball which was dropped at 1.00pm when the Fort Denison gun fired, providing both visual and auditory signals to allow ships to set their chronometers. There are two copper domes, one from 1858 with a German nineteenth century refracting telescope, and the other, added in 1877, now with a computer controlled reflecting telescope. Perhaps the most significant of the early Government Astronomers was Henry Russell, who in the 1880s began contributing to the *Astrographic Catalogue*, the first complete atlas of the sky. Eventually, the Sydney section alone took 80 years and ran to 53 volumes. By 1982, light and air pollution had minimised its value as an observatory and the building became a working astronomical outpost of the Powerhouse Museum. The front of the hill reveals its Edwardian bandstand, a Boer War monument, and a 2005 memorial to Hans Christian Anderson, along with a fine view of most of the route of the Circle Walk. Below lies charming **Argyle Place** with its village square and row of nineteenth century Georgian and Victorian houses. The *Holy Trinity (Garrison) Church* had its beginnings in 1840 using stone from the Argyle Cut, then under construction. A second stage, to Edmund Blacket's design, was completed by 1878, though its proposed spire was never built. Inside, it displays fine windows and memorials to its association with early British and later military regiments, some of them stationed at the old Fort at nearby Dawes Point.